

LEADERS

MOST PEOPLE ON the left would argue that 'democracy' is infinitely preferable to fascism and many working class people died in what they saw as a fight against the tyranny of fascism. However, this supposed alternative also takes away our liberty in perhaps a more insidious manner because of the smoke-screen it hides behind.

One of the main distinctions between the two is the use of naked force by fascism as opposed to the subtle brainwashing which is used in a democracy. One method is blatant and crude, the other, subtle and sophisticated but achieving the same goal: our passive acceptance of a system that oppresses us. A main part of this menacing strategy is the cult of leadership, a cult which is incompatible with the establishment of a society based on freedom and equality.

In any spectrum of human intelligence, there is a wide range of abilities with most people falling somewhere in the middle, with just a few 'geniuses' and 'idiots'. Therefore, when it comes to transforming society, the collective intelligence, knowledge and experience far outweighs the contribution of a few 'geniuses'.

Despite this wealth of abilities, human history has been marked by the usurpation of struggle and movements for social change by leaders who claim to 'know best'. It has been, and still is, a painful historical struggle of men and women to gain freedom from the political, economic and spiritual shackles which have bound them. But time and time again, having rid themselves of one tyranny, people have replaced it with another. Afraid to use their new found freedom, they hold up their wrists to some new jailer. If anarchist communism is to be achieved and capitalism overthrown, then we must do much more than get rid of the obvious sources of oppression. The working class must also transform itself as individuals so as to reject leaders and any new tyranny.

Passivity

It is not surprising that people are so willing to submit to leaders. Capitalist society is organised so as to bleed us of our capacity to think for ourselves and take control of our own lives. This learned passivity manifests itself on the most subtle psychological levels. Individuals have a need to identify with something so as to gain some kind of recognition and importance. Subcultures within capitalist society such as the Skinheads fulfill this role. There is a dress and hair code that identifies the individual as a member of a group. All the individual has to do to

become a part of the group is to conform to the accepted attitudes and behaviour. If the individual begins to question aspects of group behaviour or to challenge the informal leadership structure, then he/she is rejected and loses group membership, a traumatic experience for many. The same analysis could be applied to



ARE YOU STRONG ENOUGH
TO LIVE WITHOUT THE
BLIND FOLD

many political groups eg the Communist Party in the 1950s. Though groups may profess an antagonism to capitalist society, they actually incorporate and crystallise its values.

The most prevalent manifestation of these latent tendencies is the universal demand for leadership. Schools and youth movements are urged to train children for the 'task of leadership'. Job references need to refer to the applicant's 'leadership qualities'. Workers are asked to choose their leaders in the form of union representatives. Political parties from the Conservatives to the extreme left select their leaders and then voters have to choose which among them is to make decisions for the mass of the population. Thus, the cult of leadership pervades the whole of society.

Initiative

Before we examine what is involved in this general desire for leadership, let us distinguish a quality which is often confused with leadership: individual initiative. This is fundamentally the impulse to originate, to construct and, in relation to others, to elicit their approval. It is a self-expressive impulse which has nothing in common with the will to power. This realisation of the self, the expression of the uniqueness of the individual is one of the most essential features of an anarchist communist society and must be preserved at all costs. However, the individual can only realise him/herself in the community and not in spite of this community. This distinction is important because in the first case the individual

becomes part of the pattern of society but does not submerge his/her identity whereas in the second case the individual loses his or her individuality.

We are told we need leaders because there would be no discipline. It is assumed that without anyone telling us what to do, we would not know how to behave. But as anarchists we believe that human beings are naturally cooperative and that it is capitalist society and leaders who foster aggressivity and selfish competition.

We are often drawn to charismatic individuals who we allow to lead us. But we must be aware of the techniques that these individuals employ. Their claim to have the answers to our problems is a sham, the truth hidden behind demagogic rituals.

Another distraction is the claim by many parties on the left that what we need is better leaders. In other words, they would make better leaders. But this is another dangerous diversion, for what we need is *no* leaders, not *better* ones.

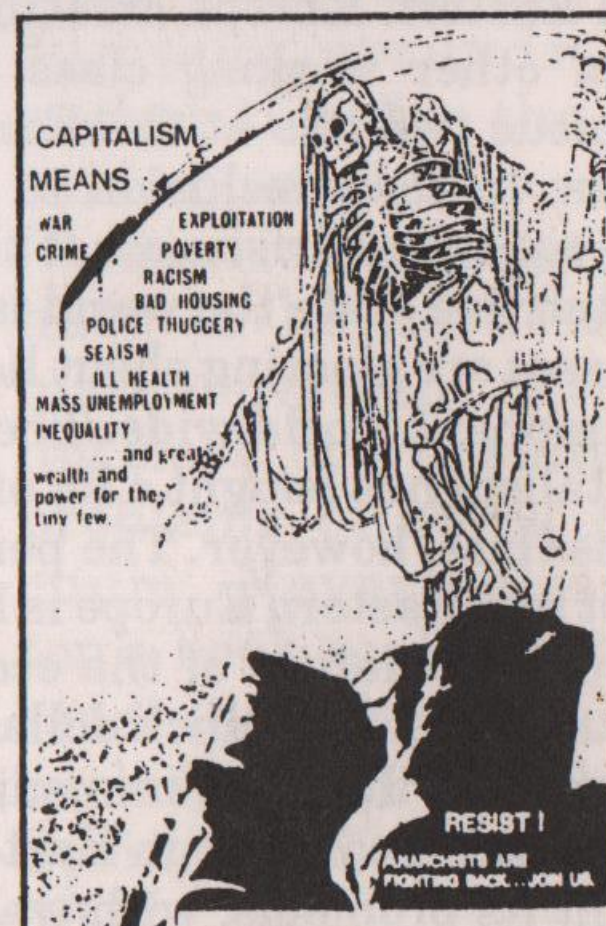
Unnatural

The social hierarchy that we accept as a natural order is just as unnatural and illogical as government. There are no 'natural' leaders only a ruling class which has grabbed power and uses this power to exploit and dominate the mass of the population. Social classes are not ordained by nature but the historic product of an exploitative society. Unfortunately this acceptance of hierarchy has filtered down to all levels of society and even exists in the organisations that workers create to challenge the system.

Collective responsibility is the alternative to leadership and the counterpart to equality. If we are to succeed in building an anarchist communist society, then the working class must learn to rely on itself. And, each individual in that class must be prepared to take responsibility and participate in the transforming of society. The revolution must therefore be not only against the ruling class but against leaders and hierarchy at all levels of society and most importantly, against our own passivity.

POSTER

Bundles of this poster can be got from the London address. Please send donation. Also available: stickers and a leaflet explaining what is anarchist communism.



ORGANISE!

for class struggle anarchism

50p

Jan-March
1993

Issue 29

WHEN THE MARCHING'S OVER



WHAT'S NEXT?

INSIDE:

Unions: Debate, Miners, Italian Workers, Leadership, Intellectualism, And Much More!

Magazine of the
Anarchist Communist Federation

ORGANISE!

ORGANISE! IS THE national magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation (ACF). *Organise!* is a quarterly theoretical journal published in order to develop anarchist communist ideas. It aims to give a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues, and initiate debates on areas not normally covered by agitational journals.

All articles in the magazine are by ACF members unless signed. Some reflect ACF policy and others open up debate in undiscussed areas, helping us to develop our ideas further.

Please feel welcome to contribute articles to *Organise!* — as long as they don't conflict with our Aims and Principles we will publish them. (Letters, of course, need not agree with our A&Ps at all.)

Deadlines for next issue are 22nd February for features and reviews, and 5th March for letters and news.

All contributions for the next issue should be sent to:
ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

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THE ANARCHIST Communist Federation is an organisation of class struggle anarchists. Its structure is based on groups and individual members. We have members in the following areas:

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The ACF promotes the building of a strong and active anarchist movement in Britain and internationally and has contact with like-minded anarchists overseas.

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PRESS FUND

THE PRESS FUND exists so you can contribute to the everyday running and production costs of *Organise!* Money is always needed for printing, postage, layout materials and a host of other things. We also want to see *Organise!* produced more frequently, with more pages and

with a greater print run. Money is also needed to finance more pamphlets.

Thanks to all those who contributed to the Press Fund this issue:

£60, Sheffield; £100, London; £5, Ponypool; £8, Suffolk.

An important role

ORGANISE! CONTINUES the tradition of criticism and analysis of all the major problems in developing both revolutionary theory and movement. We think that *Organise!* has an important role to play in the growth of a real revolutionary movement. We know from rising sales that many of our readers feel the same.

But we need your support to help keep the furnace burning.

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Although our sales are rising, we need to keep boosting circulation, so try and take a bundle to sell to friends or workmates. By selling *Organise!* you can help our

ideas to reach more and more people.

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You can help to make *Organise!* yours by writing letters and articles.

Organise! will improve through a two-way process of criticism and feedback, and will better reflect the reality of struggle through readers communicating with us. Please write in with your ideas.

Please send all feedback, contributions for *Organise!*, requests for papers and Press Fund money (payable to ACF) to the London address.

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BACK ISSUES OF *Organise!* (from issue 14 to issue 28 inclusive) are still available, from the London group address, as are a few copies of its forerunner *Virus*.

Back issues cost 20p & sae each and include the following:

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- *Organise!* 22: Recession; poll tax; warfare state; Commune; Asia.
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Cover photograph
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Rich Cross

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WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE...

WERE YOU bewildered, or maybe sickened, by all those back-bench Tory MPs, *The Sun*, *The Star*, Paddy Ashdown and the bishops all expressing horror at the pit closures and pledging support? Were you maybe suspicious of the support the Labour Party gave the miners after how they behaved in 1984-5? And what did you think about Arthur Scargill getting chummy with the well-heeled residents of Kensington?

Alongside the threatened closure of 31 pits comes the massive redundancies and lay-offs in the car industry, amongst building workers and steelworkers and in London's teaching hospitals and the docks. The list goes on and on. Those still in employment in both the public and private sector face wage freezes and further rounds of sackings. A massive attack on the working class is being launched to pay for the chronic recession.

The massive pits closure was a spark that lit a big flare-up of anger throughout our class. The TUC mobilised hundreds of thousands of people. Yet, several months later, where is the anger, where are the mass mobilisations?

It is likely that the announcement of the pit closures was a play for power by Heseltine in order to win the leadership of the Tory Party. He banked on the support of the Thatcherite wing of the party, hoping that they would unite with him against their hated foe, the miners. He failed to realise that their animosity to him overrode any such consideration. The attack on the miners would have come sooner or later, but it was ineptly and untimely chosen.

Phoney

In order to defuse this anger the TUC, the media and other sections of the Establishment began their phoney campaign to save the mines. What could be more obscene than to see Winston Churchill, whose father ordered the shooting of miners, supposed-



ly running to their defence. Or all the lie-sheets of the media, which unleashed a barrage of anti-miner propaganda, now lauding their praises.

The TUC and Labour Party, actively aided by *The Daily Mirror*, pushed for the two demonstrations of October 25 and 30, and both of these demonstrations were massive. After listening quietly to speeches by assorted clergymen, Liberal Democrat and Labour leaders and union bureaucrats, the demonstrations dispersed without incident. Both were restrained and 'orderly'. The TUC had won the day. They had successfully let a little steam be let off, without the crowds taking any radical action. They feel that this is enough now, and have no need to call any demonstrations. The arrival of marching miners in London in late December was not met by a demonstration, but consisted of a tour around the capital in an open-top bus!

The leadership of the **National Union of Miners** connived at this. They were content to mobilise 'public opinion' and to go through the courts to stop the closure of the pits. All this was designed to head off any action amongst both the miners and other sections of workers. No appeals were made for solidarity action from other workers in other industries, either those directly or indirectly affected by the knock-on effect of the closure of the pits.

Scargill is no different from other union bureaucrats. He uses radical rhetoric to disguise his manoeuvres. This writer remembers with anger the day a mass picket was planned to blockade Grunwicks in North London, where

a long hard strike had gone on for months. Scargill turned up with a large battalion of miners, and then proceeded to lead them and thousands of others away from the factory on a walk-about. The mass picket was sabotaged. On that day in 1977 I was left standing with a hundred or so others, surrounded and outnumbered by the police. Yes, Scargill is a past master at defusing struggles!

Nationalist

With his allies in the Labour Left, like Skinner, Scargill talks about the need for 'British' coal, echoing the strong nationalist message in the TUC-Labour campaign of 'For Jobs and Recovery'. He has used the opportunity of going through the courts to delay any actions by miners, in the same way he called off mass pickets in the Great Strike after court orders. The left of the NUM apparatus,

like Dave Douglass, has happily gone along with this use of the courts and obsession with public opinion.

As for the extreme left, they once again demonstrated their attachment to the unions and to the TUC, totally discredited among many workers. The **Socialist Workers Party** demanded that the TUC call a general strike! As if the TUC was willing or capable of doing such a thing. When the TUC did call a General Strike in 1926 they succeeded in limiting and enfeebling it and brought about the biggest defeat our class has ever suffered in this country. Groups like the **Communist Party of Great Britain** (*The Leninist*) rab-bited on about preparing for a General Strike, with or without the TUC. Any effective strike action would mean not with or without but against the TUC!

All these different elements, from the TUC and Labour to the extreme left are attempting to limit and blinder any actions that the working class will take. The demonstrations and related activity were designed to divert and demoralise. People were meant to feel that they had done their bit, that after all, nothing could be changed, and that after a dreary walk through driving rain, they must go home and accept "Things as they are".



ACE

Anarchist Communist Editions

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Refuse

But we are among those who are unwilling to knuckle under, who refuse to accept that social change cannot and will not come. The anger is still there, and it could ignite a social inferno!

The miners have been weakened by the defeat of the Great Strike. They have been decimated by redundancies. They cannot fight alone. If they do so, they will be defeated again, and demoralisation will be even greater. Any action by the miners must be independent action, decided upon collectively and with fully mandated committees, which actively seek to go out to other workers, those in industries threatened by the shutdown of the mines, like rail and steel workers, but also other workers under threat like health workers, tube workers, bank and insurance workers. Any occupation of the pits cannot take place in isolation, as some have advocated. They must go hand in hand with the sending out of delegates to other workplaces and industries, to mobilise regional and national stoppages. Blockades of road and rail on a mass scale could be usefully employed. The unemployed must be effectively involved in the struggle, with flying columns going to the dole queues. The working class population of each area, including housewives, the young and the old must be involved in any collective decision-making and mass action.

The battle to defend the miners is not just for the miners themselves. If the boss class win this battle they will feel even more confident and will press on with renewed confidence in cutting jobs and slashing services. The miners fight is the fight of the entire working class. Solidarity action is vital. Workers at Drax power station, a thousand of them, showed an example, when they struck in support of the miners on October 21. And the anger is building up in other workplaces. Health workers at University College Hospital in London successfully won their strike recently. Militant action is beginning to be taken. But action must come not in an isolated way, but with united joint action, seeking to draw in other workers.

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STRUGGLE WORLDWIDE

Nigeria

TO CAMOUFLAGE THE nature of the military dictatorship in Nigeria the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida convoked elections for December 1992. The military regime has created its own political parties for the election, the Social Democratic Party and the National Republican Convention.

In the run up to the elections the military regime has increased its arbitrary detentions of political activists, prohibition of certain political activities, imposition of legal edicts and all sorts of militarist interventions.

The repression coincided with the increased balance of payments deficit (40 billion dollars) and hyper-inflation (32%) combined with the increasing social problems.

The increasing desperation of the regime has resulted in the closing of the universities since July and the persecution of university teachers and students.

The Babangida regime has also harassed journalists, arresting people working on the *Lagos Daily News* and an independent newspaper, the *African Guardian*. The four journalists arrested on the *African Guardian* had reported the murder of two students during clashes with the armed forces.

Among those still in detention are the four comrades of the **Awareness League**, a libertarian socialist group, Udemba Chuks, Garba Audu, Kingsley Etioni and James Ndubuisi.

They were arrested after one of the demonstrations by students and workers which have spread throughout the country during the last few months. The Awareness League comrades are imprisoned in appalling conditions.

The Awareness League has launched a campaign for their release, along with all the others detained. Any donations and pledges of support will be much appreciated. Make contact via Awareness League c/o Samuel Mbah, PO Box 28, Aghani, Enugu State, Nigeria.



Moldavia

TWO ANARCHISTS have fallen victim to the authoritarian nationalist regime in Moldavia. On 29 April Tamara Burdenko was dismissed for "violation of work discipline" from the review Kodry where she had worked for 14 years.

The real reason is the politics of her and her husband Igor Hergenreorder, who is disabled. Igor has written several articles in the opposition press analysing the war-mongering policies of the Pridnestrovyie regime. The Moldavian KGB have pursued Igor for these articles.

The chief editor has denied that Tamara was dismissed for political reasons. He is an ardent supporter of the government.

Dictator

The ultra-right National Christian Party has been organising a campaign to rehabilitate the Romanian fascist dictator Ion Antonescu, an ally of Hitler. This campaign has been supported by various government officials who follow the Romanian government. Igor and Tamara were among those who denounced fascism in a press declaration in July.

Since then the two libertarians have had their door kicked down by an unknown attacker who fled when the neighbours intervened. Two days later another unknown

handed Igor a sack containing a dog's head. The day after, the TV news informed the public that the Russian Trans-Dniester separatists were setting up anarchist groups in the Moldavian capital. The State Public Prosecutor intends to press charges against the two, and their lawyer has said he will no longer defend them.

Send telegrams and postcards of protest to the following addresses. This is not a waste of time as the Moldavian government can be pressured to stop their witchhunt. A campaign earlier in 1992 led to charges being dropped against two anarchists in Russia.

Popular Tribunal of Buyukan Sector, Moldavia, Kishinev-1 ul. M. Vistayazaul, d.2. President of Tribunal.

Ministry of Justice, Moldavia, Kishinev-12 ul. Stefan cheu Mare, d.73.

Parliament, Kishinev-1. ul. Stefan cheu Mare, d.105. Secretariat of Moldavian Parliament. Commission of Human Rights.

President of Moldavia, Kishinev-1. pl. Velikogo Natsionalnogo Sobraniya, d.1 Michar Ion Snegur.

Greece

THE ANARCHIST Group of Chania in Crete has published some extracts from a letter sent by an imprisoned militant, Vardis Tsouris. We reprint them here:

"They have imprisoned me, it must be two years now, because of my participation in a demonstration at Chania against the presence of the American Army, which constitutes a permanent war menace, particularly in that month of July 1990.

I was released thanks to the movement of support organised by the Chania Committee against the bases and dependence on the Americans. Today I'm back in prison. Why?

First of all for refusing to obey, because I refused the humiliation of presenting myself at the police station every month...an individual is free

or not free. I don't want a mutilated liberty: in prison for saying no to the state, I have kept my liberty; outside as submissive citizen, I would have lost it. Secondly, for prevention. The government, overwhelmed by the recent popular awakening, have seen strikes and demonstrations proliferate, including at Chania. They want to isolate the presumed inciters.

But people don't come out in the streets because of an individual but because of their social conditions, and finally for their right to justice, economic equality and freedom.

I express my solidarity with all those who are opposed to the class in power, to capital, to the multinationals and to Maastricht...as well as to those who could join this opposition, because if things are bad then they'll get worse".

Vardis Tsouris has not been judged and if he is refused bail will spend another 18 months in jail. He is at present on hunger strike.

Mass demonstration

The mass demonstration at Chania on 23-24 July 1990 against the American bases has not been forgotten by the rulers. And the moment chosen to gaoil Vardis Tsouris coincided with a period of general strike massively supported by the working class in response to a huge price rise on many products, as well as a rise in the rate of national insurance, drastically affecting the cost of living of working people. All designed so that on the eve of Maastricht the Greek economy becomes Euro-compatible.

Los Angeles

DONALD COLEMAN has been the first of 8,000 people arrested after the Los Angeles riots to be sentenced.

He received 19 years and 8 months from Superior Judge Nancy Brown for chucking a molotov cocktail into a 7-11 store on the second night of rioting.

This vicious sentence is a sign of what will come for all those arrested for daring to express their rage at their conditions, racism and State brutality.

Italy: Workers against the Unions

ENORMOUS CHANGES and great unrest, hardly reported on by the British media, have swept through Italy. The example given by the Italian working class is not one that the British rulers want us to take to heart.

The fall of the Wall and the defeat of state capitalism in Eastern and Central Europe led to a change of circumstances in Italy. The old system that had existed since the end of the last World War ended. The **Christian Democrats (DC)** had stayed in power in conjunction with a number of allies whilst the **Italian Communist Party (PCI)** who could muster 30% of the vote remained as an 'opposition' in a 'historic compromise'.

The government forces lost the complete support of the USA which had helped keep them in power, whilst the PCI dropped its pretence at opposition, changed its name to **Democratic Party of the Left (PDS)** along with its structure, and became a pretender to government as a credible 'democratic force'. All this happened over the heads of a population, in particular the large number of workers who had been under the ideological sway of the PCI, and who were further alienated by the actions of the political class.

Scandal

This was further aggravated by scandal after scandal concerning the political parties, first of all the **Italian So-**

cialist Party (PSI), and then the DC and PDS. Party officials had funnelled money into their own bank accounts or for the benefit of their party. A section of the magistrature led a series of investigations into these scandals, revealing the depth of corruption within the Italian State. There is a strong likelihood that elements within the State with the participation of certain sections of the ruling class gave these judges free rein, to help in a formal change of power in line with a 'United Europe'. These investigations failed to reveal all the wheelings and dealings of the secret services, the State engineered massacres and 'politics of tension' of the '70s and '80s. This would be too much to ask.

Animosity

At the same time the **Leagues of the North** emerged. These were political organisations created several years ago, with a pseudo-federalist rhetoric, playing on the animosity between the 'productive' North and a 'parasitic' Centre and South. The Leagues increased their electoral support at the last elections in April, passing from one MP to 80, and have consolidated their support in the great industrial centres of the North like Milan, Brescia, Bergamo, etc.

After the April elections a new government was cobbled together with a small majority on an anti-League basis, led by the 'socialist' Amato. The clear aim of this government

was the destruction of the 'historic compromise' that has been the basis of the post-war Italian State.

House of Cards

The Italian economy, much vaunted as the fourth or fifth healthiest in the world, had become a house of cards. Consumerism, encouraged up to the present, became for the government, a danger leading to inflation. Everyone now had to make sacrifices. In July the unions (CGIL, CSIL, UIL) signed an accord with the government and the employers agreeing a wage freeze and the abolition of the sliding scale of wages (which adjusted wages with any rise in inflation). Of course, the union membership had not been consulted. The unions had, obviously afraid of working class anger, signed the accord during the annual closure of the factories.

In September, the Amato government launched a series of measures attacking the working class. Amongst the most vicious was the freeze of pensions and a raising of the age of retirement, the housing tax extended to lodgers and tenants, the ending of health benefits for many working class people and a tax on bank savings, as well as a rise in costs of driving licences, passports and other official documents. The excuse for all these measures was a huge State budget deficit. These measures, it is estimated, would put an additional 500,000 below the poverty



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line. In addition, rises in gas, electricity and rent were at the planning stage, as well as big cuts in social expenditure.

All the parties and unions supported the manoeuvres of the government, with the exception of **Rifondazione Comunista** (a merger of those who had rejected the change of direction of the PCI with the Leftist group **Democrazia Proletaria**) and the Greens in parliament.

Outburst

To the great surprise of many, the token demonstrations called by the unions in mid-September turned into a huge outburst of working class anger. In Florence, Turin, Milan, Naples and above all Rome, the rallies were interrupted by slogan-chanting, whistling and the throwing of eggs and rotten tomatoes. The police had to be called in to protect the union bureaucrats behind riot shields! The union stewards waded into the crowd savagely beating workers and students with clubs. The media explained the events by saying that several dozen provocateurs, autonomists, anarchists and ex-terrorists had sabotaged the 'peaceful and democratic' demonstrations. In reality, newsreels revealed the mass nature of the discontent and the indiscriminate charges of the police in collaboration with the union stewards. In the workplaces the discontent was shown with 25% of workers not renewing their union membership this year. In Milan factory workers marched to the rail station, calling on the railway workers for support and blockaded the rails. Other blockades of rail and road took place in other areas. In Naples a crowd of factory workers stormed a meeting of the metalworkers union leadership. In terror, the union called a general strike in the area that night. In Milan a hundred workers wrecked a union H.Q.

Wildcat strikes then broke out in places like Venice, Florence, Ancona and above all at Genoa. Here the workers on the public transport system held a mass assembly, marched to meet the council workers, where another assembly was held, and called on the postal workers to join them. A march took place, bringing out

large numbers of factory workers and sailors.

Sabotage

The unions attempted to limit the independent action



of the workers by calling general strikes, but limiting them to regions. In Genoa they sabotaged the mass movement there by calling their own mass assembly and persuading workers to only strike for a day.

In response to the union manoeuvres, a number of organisations developed. Inside the CGIL union, a left emerged called **Essere Sindacato** (To Be Unionised). This was backed by **Rifondazione Comunista** and represented an attempt to keep the struggle within the unions. The **CUB** (United Rank and File Confederation) was created outside the unions, rallying several thousand workers, above all among metalworkers. The **COBAS** (rank and file committees created in the 1986-7 wave of struggle), strong in the public sector, appear to be establishing links with CUB. Outside of these structures are the **RDB** (Rank and File Representatives) who appear to be federating, as well as structures created in the '70s, factory councils created by the anarchists and **Autonomia Operaia**.

All these structures came together to organise an alternative demonstration to the official union one in Rome on October 2. This brought out 30,000, demonstrating a desire of many workers to go beyond the unions.

The unions were able to use

the tactic of 'saving democracy' with a temporary abating of working class anger, to divert attention from the government attacks and complicity by the unions. The relative weakness of the new

yond the 18% support given to their union bloc, **Essere Sindacato**. Like it or not, they have a substantial number of workers under their ideological sway and can be counted on to block any future radicalisation of struggle. The strike of October 13 only lasted four hours and the unions were able to control events in the street, with the help of the neo-communists and the aid of the police.

What has been vitally important has been the mobilisation of large numbers of workers, organising outside the unions and on the streets, and the direct confrontation with the union bureaucrats. The independent structures increased their influence considerably in several weeks in September-October. Even **Essere Sindacato** will face problems in the future. Its bureaucrats hope for a few extra posts in the union leadership (but the established bureaucrats may put a stop to this if things calm down!).

On the other hand those workers supporting it have other expectations. Whatever happens, we can expect further momentous struggles in Italy, which can hopefully spread further afield and can inspire us all.

Block

forces of struggle allowed the unions to exploit the debates in the workplaces.

In particular the neo-communists of **Rifondazione Comunista** with their leftist allies can hope on increasing be-

ACTIVE RESISTANCE

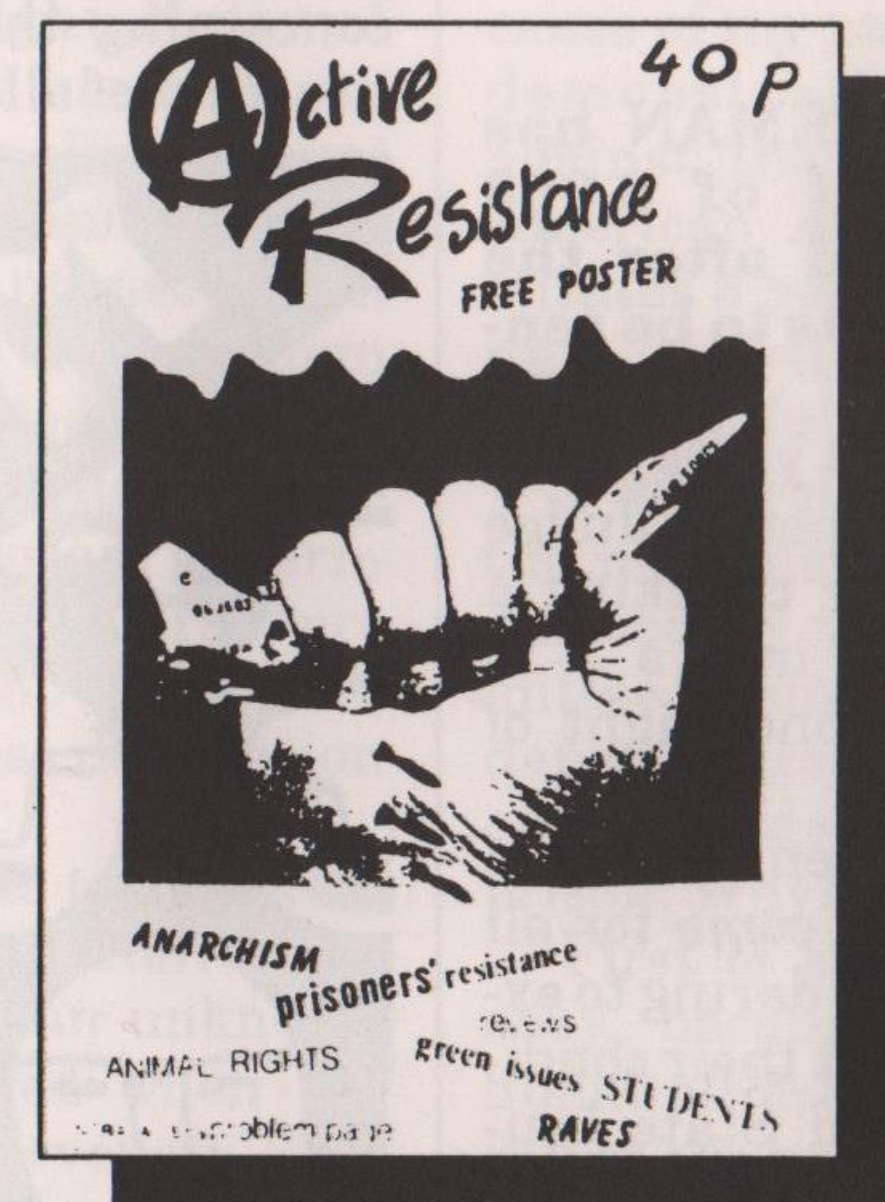
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Minnie the Minx: "I couldn't put it down."

Dennis the Menace: "I read it from cover to cover."

Gnasher: "Grrr! Woof! Gnash!"

Enquiries to London address, for details, bulk orders.



Uprising in the Land of the Rising Sun

WORKERS RIOTING ON the streets is not an image generally associated with Japan but that's just what happened last October in Osaka, Japan's second largest city. When unemployed day labourers, living on a day to day, hand-to-mouth basis had their emergency payments stopped almost 1,000 of them angrily took to the streets, constructing burning barricades and fighting 1,500 riot police for three consecutive nights.

To understand how this could happen in the mythical land of the happy worker we need to look beyond the image and at the history of Japanese capitalism's development of the past 120 years since the 1868 'revolution'.

Modern capitalist Japan has its origins in the revolution which saw the victory, after a civil war, of the lower Samurai class under the restored Emperor Meiji. The desire of this class was the creation of a secure Japan, using military might, and the development of a capacity to engage in imperialist adventures abroad. They realised that Japan's feudalistic system had to make way for Western-style emergent capitalism. In 1871 they formally 'abolished' feudalism and were on their way to developing a powerful economy based upon heavy industry.

Industrialisation

The Japanese State was, therefore, instrumental in advancing capitalism in a very direct fashion. Engaging in a massive industrialisation programme, setting enterprises up and then selling them off at knock-down prices to budding capitalists to run! It was a tradition very different to either the state capitalism of say, the Soviet Union or the nationalisation of industry in Britain.

Japanese capitalism soon took off and quickly a 'dual economy' developed with the

emergence of a light industry sector, mainly textile producing and considerably less state-aided.

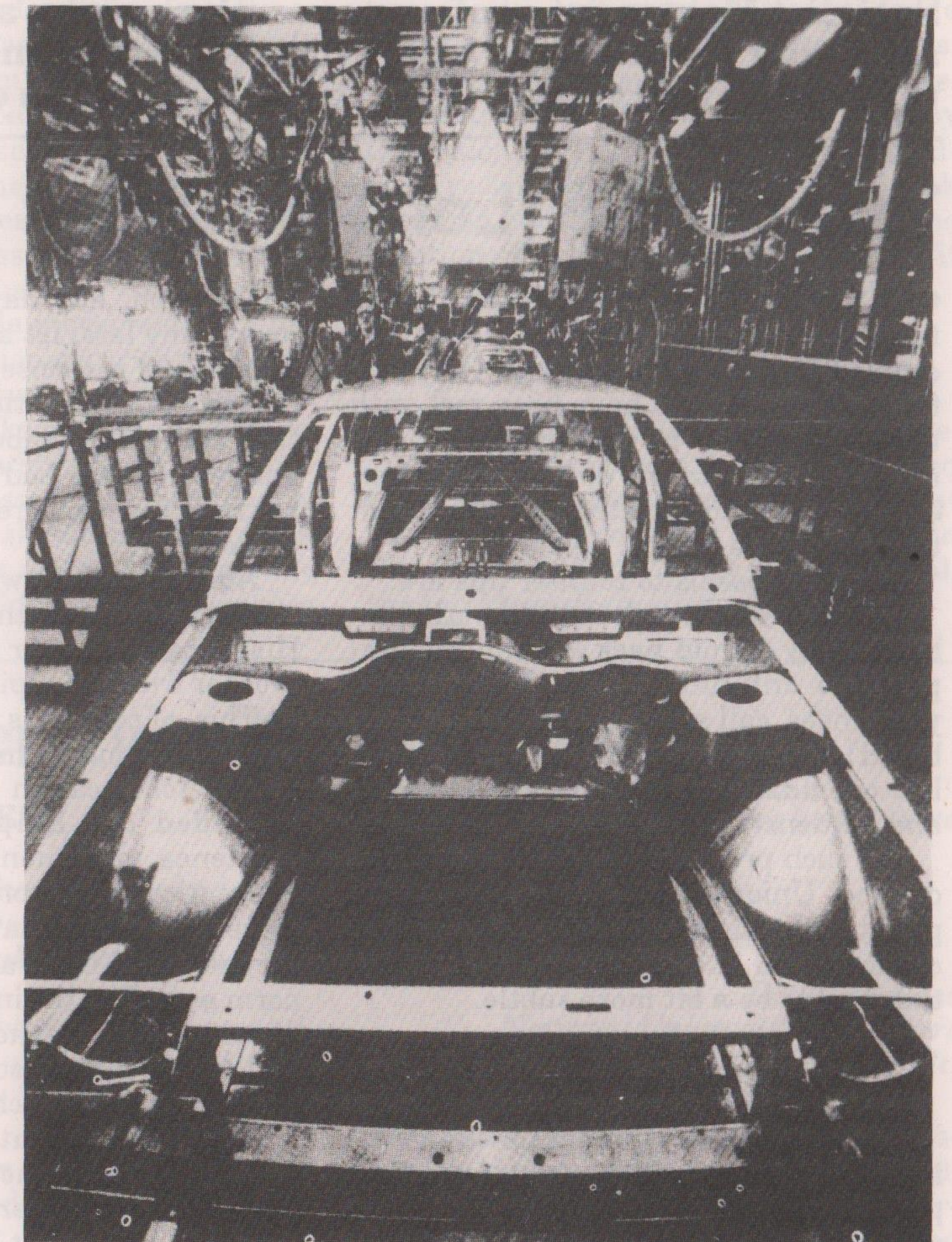
Employing mainly women workers it paid lower wages for longer hours in generally worse conditions than in the male-dominated heavy industry sector. This dual economy/dual workforce divide is still fundamental to Japanese bosses, but with some important differences.

Zaibatsu

The 1930s saw the development of the massive **Zaibatsu** companies, which dominate Japanese capitalism today. These giant corporate bodies were quick to embrace Taylorist management and production methods (not unlike the Bolsheviks in the USSR) and, hand in hand with the increasingly militarist and fascist State, mercilessly crushed attempts at workers' organisations.

The anarchist contribution to working class resistance at this time came in the form of the anarchist-communist **Black Youth League** and the **All-Japan Libertarian Federation of Labour Unions** (really more a specific anarchist-communist organisation than a union body) as well as the syndicalist minority union, the **Japanese Libertarian United Conference of Labour Unions**. There were, at their peak, more than 20,000 active anarchists in Japan. These groupings engaged in a ferocious struggle with Japan's bosses and State until their eventual suppression in 1937.

Despite Japan's defeat in the Second World War the **Zaibatsu** came out intact and actually having made a profit! However the de-industrialisation of Japan by the victorious allies led to 50% of the working population employed in more or less permanent agricultural labour. However, once the reins of economic self-determination were handed back to the Japanese bour-



geoisie the State intervened strongly with a programme of re-industrialisation whilst also launching a phenomenal export drive.

Sub-class

The division of the working class continued with the creation of a 'sub class' of what could be described as semi-unemployed alongside what some have misleadingly labelled a labour aristocracy. The 'semi-unemployed' consists of workers employed on a temporary, seasonal or day labour basis, by the **Zaibatsu** giants (like Toyota, Mitsubishi, Nissan etc) and workers in small firms which are themselves often subcontractors, subsidiaries or suppliers of the giants.

These latter workers often find themselves working for lower wages, for longer hours

and in worse conditions than those privileged to sweat for **Zaibatsu**.

But what of the permanent **Zaibatsu** workers (who incidentally make up only 30% of the Japanese workforce)? Do they really fit the image of the happy company-loyal employees as portrayed in the West?

Zaibatsu are certainly loyal; there is little alternative when your wages are paid according to time served rather than skill. Put simply, loyalty tends to exist when workers can only raise their level of income by staying with the firm! Satoshi Kamata's *Japan in the Passing Lane: An Insider's Account of Life in a Japanese Auto-Factory* is well worth a read. His descriptions of seemingly ever-increasing workloads on

Continued on page 13

WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT THE UNIONS?

WE ARE OPENING THE pages of *Organise!* to a debate on the unions. Included are the text of a leaflet handed out at a recent Socialist Movement conference on the unions, a letter sharply attacking the leaflet, a letter from a DAM member in reply to the article in *Organise!* 27 on the unions and an editorial reply.

Text of ACF (London) leaflet

CONSTANT government-employer attacks on workers' rights and conditions coupled with the illegalisation of any useful workers' actions have been met with total compliance by the unions. It has always been so, to one degree or another, but now, all union strategies are based on the acceptance of total defeat.

Some proposals to counter this are:

"Elect a left-wing leadership...the Labour Party should back the unions...Repeal the anti-union laws...TUC get off your knees, call a general strike...! Create broad left campaigns in order to get broad left candidates into positions of power and influence..."

All such proposals are simply a waste of time. Unions have always been compliant with the ruling class. Today, their collaboration is overt. In previous years they had to be a bit more subtle.

Starting point

If you want social justice for the working class of the world, a general starting point is anti-capitalism. Unions have never been anti-capitalist (although many union members are). The job of the union is to alleviate the sufferings of workers within the present system. This has developed into things like legal help, pension funds, various deals with management over wages, hours and conditions. Sometimes the union may even call for a strike in defence of all the workers, but only if workers are really pushy in their demands. All these are not in themselves 'bad' aims. But it stands to reason, that to truly serve the cause of the workers, this requires total and ceaseless hostility to the system based on the naked exploitation of our labour.

Trade unions have tried to have it both ways. In the past they may not have 'liked' capitalism very much (today they are staunch supporters of it) but at the same time they knew that they had to be legally recognised by the bosses. It is this legality which has been the kiss of death to any revolutionary movement. At the same time legality has allowed the growth (and now decline) of a reformist workers' movement.

Unions love the law, they will bend over backwards to ensure their members obey it. Increased anti-union laws, se-

questration, etc, haven't led unions to love it any less, let alone break the law. The unions' response to such attacks is to protest without action and vainly hope that some day, Labour will get elected and repeal those 'bad' laws — ironic really as trade unions were originally born out of illegality.

Added to this, we have the unions' traditional link with the Labour Party. Historically, Labour has always been for 'worker friendly' capitalism.

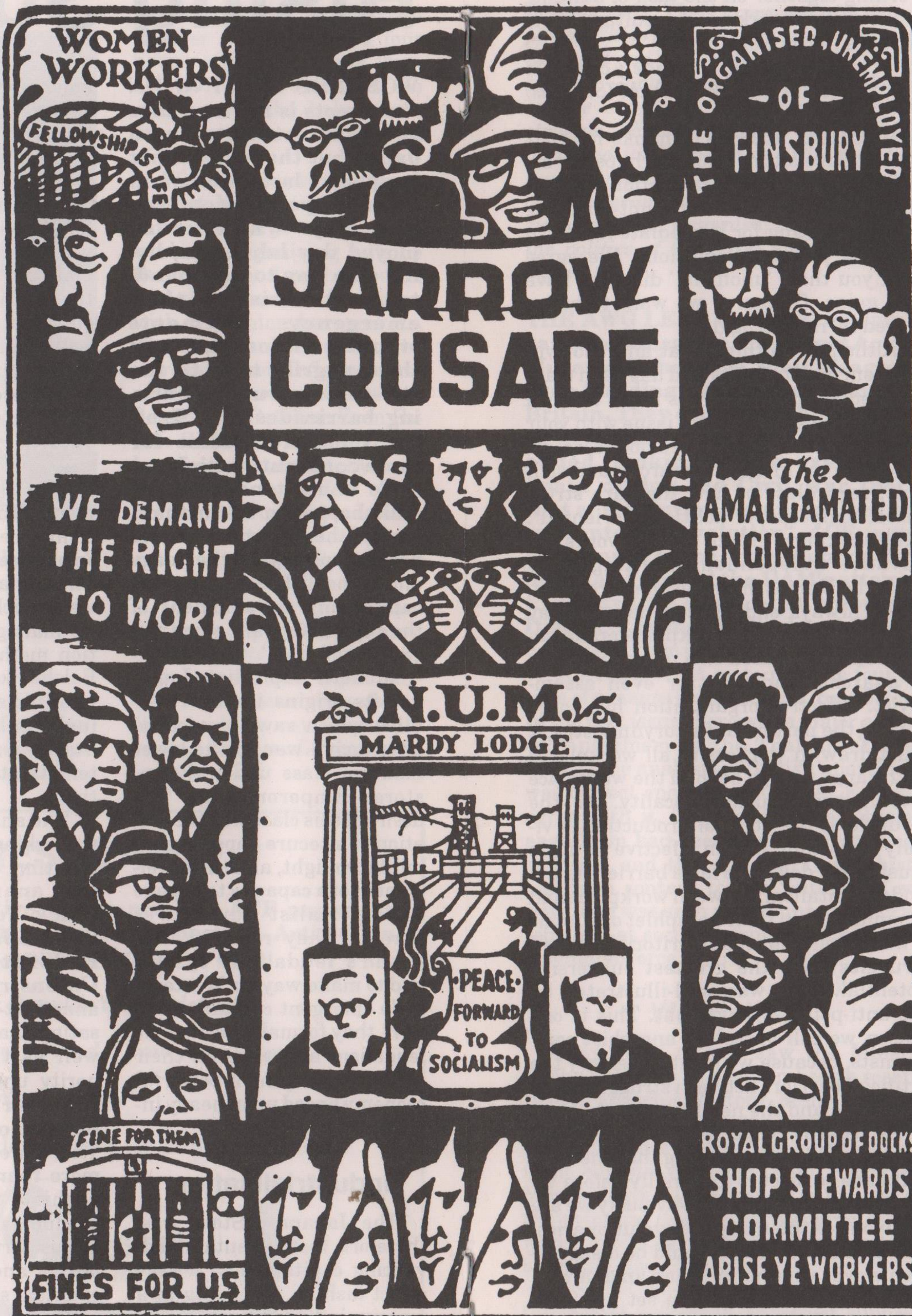
This, of course, is a contradiction. Labour governments have also suppressed strikes (on occasion even using troops), defended the Empire against independence movements, brought in the Prevention of Terrorism Act, attempted wage freezes and have been responsible for the Social Contract and the 5% wage norm as well as the introduction of monetarism. This was when the Labour Party still talked about 'socialism'. Now they have dropped all such pretences.

But what about the social gains brought about by the unions and the Labour Party? Yes there have, in the past, been real gains. But how did these come about? Nothing has ever been given freely by governments, workers have had to fight for it. And though reformers have claimed the credit for them, in reality all social gains have been won by strikes, occupations, sabotage and riots by militant sections of the working class. In short, by direct action (something Labour and the unions are totally opposed to) and workers' solidarity.

We don't need to tell you that Labour and the union bureaucrats have always been against such struggles. Indeed, anyone who's ever been involved in a dispute knows only too well that half the battle is actually against the union and its attempts to control or water-down our struggle.

Left-wing leadership

"We need left-wing leadership". The history of the labour movement is littered with sincere socialists who, once in power, have turned out to be just as bad, or worse, than the rightists. Those who have tried not to compromise their ideals have achieved nothing for the workers. One-time leftists are accused of 'selling-



out', but in truth, can it really be any other way? After all, what has a union leader got in common with a shop floor worker? To the worker, the union bureaucrat is pretty indistinguishable from the boss. In fact, many union leaders see themselves as being part of the same clique as the bosses. For workers, any meaningful change can only come from below. Real workers power lies in our own hands.

A way forward

One positive step would be the creation of a strong rank and file movement. In the past, such movements tended to put pressure on union leaders, 'democratise' the unions, create left-wing unions or have been vehicles for getting rank and file workers into positions of power. Such tactics have always led to stagnation and betrayal.

The best rank and file movement is one which acts as a workers' solidarity movement, a reservoir of strength and support for those in struggle. It needs to be a movement of the base, with union officials actively barred from involvement. Above all it must be combative, unafraid of the law and should base its tactics on direct action. As a movement it should be independent of all parties, its allegiance being to the working class only. Such a movement is long overdue.

Yet rank and file movements are not necessarily revolutionary or anti-capitalist. Revolutionary workers need to build groups and networks both in their workplaces and across industries. Such groups should work across union boundaries also. Such groups should aim to spread revolutionary ideas among rank and file workers and should also try to oppose

reformist trends in rank and file organisations. (e.g. illusions in union leaders and political parties). Such groups should be overtly anti-capitalist, anti-trade union, and hostile to all political parties. They need to be autonomous by nature, not controlled from outside but directly by their members. They should urge maximum resistance to the boss class and seek abolition of the capitalist system and the creation of a society based not on profit but on meeting human needs.

And the Unions?

Unions have always been defensive. Today, they don't even do this. They need to be replaced by a workers' movement that is not defensive but actively goes on the attack and has as its ultimate goal, the total transformation of society.

Letter in reply from Dave Douglass

DEAR COMRADES,

Just a line to say how utterly bad /inaccurate/counter-revolutionary your *What's to be Done about the Unions?* leaflet is.

Actually describing yourself as anti-trade union certainly puts you in the same camp as the Tories and big business.

To be anti-union is simply anti-working class in this and many other necks of the woods.

You could have no credibility among workers, in any workplace I know with an anti-union position.

In fact you'd just be regarded as a strike breaker, a scab or a 'non' which is a scab waiting to happen.

Look around you — 100,000 workers on strike at one time — all at one time — unions are combat organisations, albeit often deformed, betrayed or distorted by bureaucracy but it is within unions that people at work first take up the cudgels with the boss.

I refer you to my extended examples of this in the current edition of *The Heavy Stuff*, 'Charge of the Left Brigade'.

I'm afraid comrades, your enthusiasm to be radical and 'agin it all' has carried you over the class line at least as far as this pathetic leaflet is concerned.

I suggest you urgently and thoroughly rethink your position:

- a) Where is the Class?
- b) How does it fight when it fights?
- c) Where do we stand while that fight is ongoing?

Obviously you believe the answer to c)

is outside telling the workers how "you've got it all wrong again".

We are such simpletons.

Revolutionary greetings,

Dave Douglass

National Union of Mineworkers
Bloody Proud of It.

EDITORIAL REPLY: Hardly surprising to receive such a letter from you, Dave. In anarchist circles you put yourself over as the fine flower of the working class, a down-to-earth rank and file worker. When in fact you are heavily implicated in the NUM structure as a full-time official (vice-chair of South Yorkshire NUM panel) and have your own column in the *Daily Worker*, newspaper of the fiercely vanguardist **Communist Party of Great Britain**. Here you talk about the "self-serving slogans" of various Trotskyist groups which keep them on the fringes of most workers' perceptions. Perhaps you should tell this to the CPGB. Isn't being a full-time union official and a supporter of a Leninist organisation in contradiction to being a member of Class War?

Anyway to get to the point. First the hysterical and abusive language you employ. To call someone a scab or strike-breaker is a very serious charge. No one in the ACF has ever been guilty of this. We have enthusiastically supported all workplace struggles.

Many of us did active solidarity work in the last Miners' Strike, some of us in the previous two. We also actively worked in solidarity action for P&O and Silent Night strikers, the Wapping Printworkers, the list is long. This does not mean



that we ever supported the union bureaucrats.

Sabotage

No, you're wrong. Many workers are on different levels aware that the unions are incapable of defending their interests. The history of class struggle in the car factories points to this.

Just look at the declining membership of the unions. Workers aren't leaving or failing to join the unions because they lack class consciousness. They see clearly that it is a waste of time and money joining an organisation that does not defend their interests.

On the underground, on the rail, in the docks, the unions have worked consistently to sabotage any action by workers organising themselves. In the recent wave of strikes in Greece and Germany, the unions successfully stymied independent workers action.

In Italy (see elsewhere in this issue) the working class moved outside and against the unions. In the next wave of class struggle throughout the world, workers will increasingly move outside the unions, creating new forms of organisation.

This will be the reality. Those people still in love with the unions will either have to re-think, or be a barrier to any advances in the war with the bosses.

(Thanks to 'Trotwatch' for info on Dave Douglass)



Reply to 'Unions' article

DEAR COMRADES,

I was very interested to read the article in *Organise!* No. 27 on 'Organising in the Workplace'. It is good to see that you are trying to confront this issue which is of vital importance. I write as a member of the Public service workers' network, a body recently set up by members and ex-members of DAM.

Unfortunately, there are a number of errors in your article which give it a narrow sectarian tone. You really should ditch this council communist dogma about all unions necessarily ending in a mess of hierarchy and sell-outs regardless of how they are structured, composed, or politically oriented. Only workplace groups and networks can advance independent working class struggle. Unions, however they are structured, always end up negotiating away workers' interests. Workplace organisation cannot be based on a union, even if it is anarcho-syndicalist or even assemblyist. Effective organisation has to go beyond the particular factory/industry; it must draw in workers in all workplaces in the area, and go beyond the workplace into the neighbourhood/locality. Yes, the struggle at the point of production is vitally important, but an effective struggle must break down the false barriers in life under capitalism, between workplace and 'community'. In their pamphlet on unions Wildcat point out that territorially based struggles have the greatest subversive potential. This was well-illustrated by the anti-poll tax movement. This is one reason we call ourselves anarchist communists, because we want to destroy the artificial barriers between struggle in the workplace and the neighbourhood.

As regards cooperation in one united network. This is something that the ACF will have to discuss nationally before we can give you an answer. Obviously we are in favour of the unity of revolutionaries. However one obstacle would be disagreements over whether or when an anarcho-syndicalist union could be set up. Such differences led to the breakup of the Communication Worker group in the postal depots. A point would come when DAM members would be arguing for the establishment of an anarcho-syndicalist union. The question arises as to how much joint work, and on what level, anarchist communists and anarcho-syndicalists can cooperate in the short and medium term.

We would like to believe that you would not put the ideological purity of your organisation before the interests of the class.

We would like to see members and non-members of DAM, ACF and CWF working together on the task of building industrial networks and a culture of resistance in the workplace.

in the spirit of comradely criticism
Paul F. PSWN/DAM (S.Yorks)

EDITORIAL REPLY: Thanks for your constructive letter, Paul. Perhaps our article on workplace organisation was not clear enough. We were not arguing against fighting for immediate needs, in terms of pay and conditions. We agree with you that 'unofficial' disputes have won gains. Of course we want to be involved in 'real struggle'.

Although we think that anarcho-syndicalism had its faults and has been transcended, we agree there is much to learn from it. However, we take issue with your statement that unions need not necessarily end in a "mess of hierarchy and sell-outs, regardless of how they are structured, composed, or politically oriented". Only workplace groups and networks can advance independent working class struggle. Unions, however they are structured, always end up negotiating away workers' interests. Workplace organisation cannot be based on a union, even if it is anarcho-syndicalist or even assemblyist. Effective organisation has to go beyond the particular factory/industry; it must draw in workers in all workplaces in the area, and go beyond the workplace into the neighbourhood/locality. Yes, the struggle at the point of production is vitally important, but an effective struggle must break down the false barriers in life under capitalism, between workplace and 'community'. In their pamphlet on unions Wildcat point out that territorially based struggles have the greatest subversive potential. This was well-illustrated by the anti-poll tax movement. This is one reason we call ourselves anarchist communists, because we want to destroy the artificial barriers between struggle in the workplace and the neighbourhood.

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We hope to continue with this debate in future. Next issue we review two pamphlets: Dave Douglass' pamphlet on the unions and Wildcat's reply to it.

The Death of the AWG

The Anarchist Workers Group was set up in June 1988. Their expressed aim was to build a "libertarian communist organisation that can — for the first time in this country — put it truly where it belongs: centre stage in the arena of class struggle." Four years later the AWG has dissolved itself and most of its members have retreated into private life, with two or three gravitating to a Leninist magazine. Analysis. Organise! takes a look at the politics of the AWG and why it collapsed.

THE AWG LEFT the anarcho-syndicalist organisation, the Direct Action Movement, because they disagreed over building syndicalist unions in Britain. They criticised this strategy as being divorced from reality and added, looking at the example of Spain during the Civil War there, that a "revolutionary union does not guarantee a revolution". ACF members would agree with them on this point, and indeed the DAM's attempt to construct a syndicalist union, the Dispatch Industry Workers' Union, collapsed in mid-1992 in apathy.

The AWG went on to produce four issues of a magazine *Socialism from Below*. In the first issue there was a major article on 'Anarchism in the Thatcher Years'. Most of the analysis of British anarchism was correct enough, and the ACF would agree with it. They stated that British anarchism had been divorced from class struggle, and that for years anarchists had been content to live 'outside' of society, and was seen as a 'counter-cultural' rebellion at society's fringes rather than a dynamic force.

Watershed

They quite rightly saw the Miners' Strike of 1984-5 as a watershed in recent British anarchist history. Many activists began to "rediscover the class roots of anarchism and realise how far the movement had strayed from them. From the Miners' Strike and through to the end of the printers' dispute at Wapping many were forced... to make the break and embrace the class struggle".

The AWG also, with reason, pointed to the lack of politics in anarchist support for the miners' strike. There was a refusal to criticise Scargill and the NUM leadership, activity being reduced to unquestioning support of the NUM.

However, the general analysis went on to consider specific Anarchist organisations, and here the tone was extremely patronising, particularly as the AWG owed its existence to political developments that had taken place in DAM, the ACF and Class War, before the AWG had even existed. When they analysed ACF

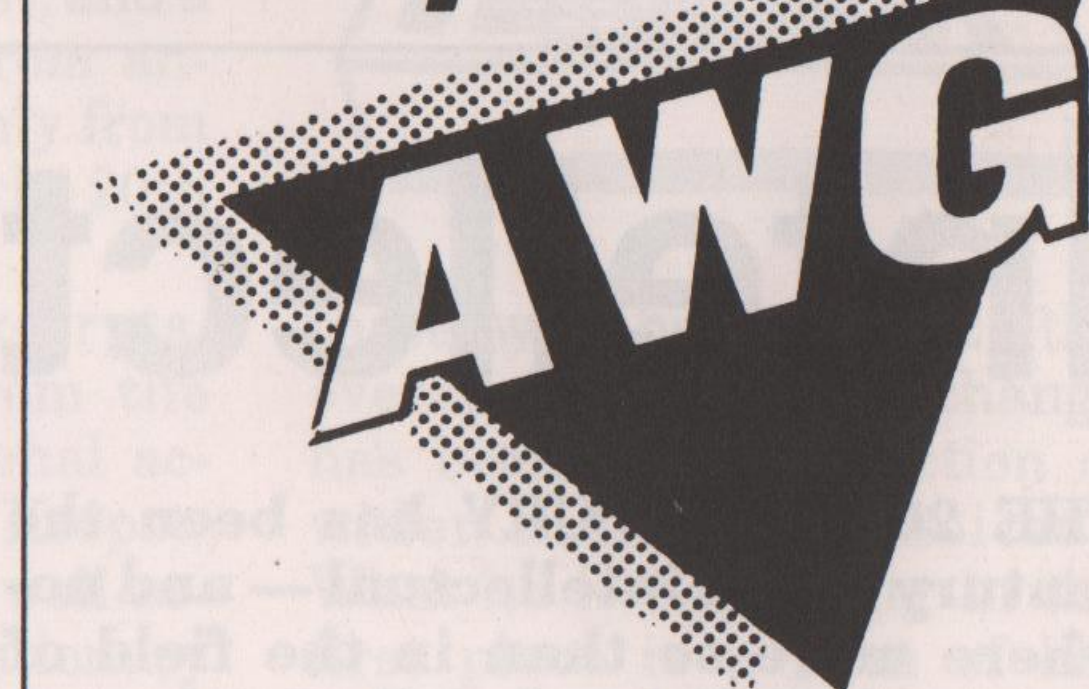
politics they showed little interest in a real examination. Their analysis was more of a dismissal, accusing us of ultra-leftism, without adequately explaining what they meant by this term.

Indeed the politics that the AWG developed was partly shared by the ACF, in terms of the need for class struggle politics, and theoretical and tactical unity. However they did not share similar positions on the unions, on nationalism, and as time passed their concept of organisation began to evolve. The ACF, long before its discovery by future AWG members, had taken a look at the *Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists*, a document produced in 1926 by Makhno, Arshinov and other Russian anarchists, that persuasively argued for a strong national anarchist organisation based on tactical and ideological unity. However, we saw faults in the *Platform*. It is one of the most important statements by revolutionary anarchists, but it contains certain errors and has been superseded by, for example, the *Manifesto of Libertarian Communism* (An ACF pamphlet, available from national address). The AWG however treated the *Platform* as if it was a biblical text, to be worshipped without question. The Platform group learnt a lot from the defeat of anarchism during the Russian revolution, but they were to some extent in awe of the centralised efficiency of the Bolshevik victors.

Leadership of Ideas

The AWG came to many of the same conclusions as the ACF in their article on organisation in No.2 of their journal. They took on board the idea of 'leadership of ideas' developed inside the *Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists* in the '70s and continued within the ACF. This idea calls for anarchism to become the leading concept of the revolution. This leadership is purely at the level of ideas and should not be confused with the political monopolisation of struggle advanced by Leninist vanguard parties. Like the ACF, the AWG recognised the contradiction between a politically advanced minority and the rest of the working class, and therefore of the danger of substituting the will of the minority for that of the whole class. Unlike the ACF however, it failed to realise that the best way to avoid these pitfalls was by as actively as possible empowering the class as a whole, by advocating the most libertarian forms of organisation and struggle (see our pamphlet *The Role of the Revolutionary Organisation* for a discussion of these problems). Instead they argued for a 'cadre organisation' of trained revolutionaries, skilled in public speaking, writing articles and leaflets etc. Now, the ACF would not deny that anarchist com-

Anarchist Workers Group



munist militants should develop these skills and that indeed a revolutionary organisation should help this come about. But the AWG actively froze the relation between the anarchist militant and the mass of the population by using concepts derived from Leninism, themselves derived from French military theory; the cadre as a permanent officer class ready to control the conscript mass. They did not talk half enough about the need to help the majority of the class to develop liberating skills. Indeed the AWG 'cadre' meant to withstand the harsh political climate was unable to survive more than four years.

Finally, on the question of national liberation the AWG steered a path that smashed them on the reefs. With the Gulf War the AWG stated in *Socialism from Below* 3 that it stood "alone on the libertarian left for concentrating our fire on Western imperialism. Most anarchist groups, inspired by either pacifist or left communist ideas, have refused to take sides and instead raised the slogan 'No War But the Class War!'...". The AWG stated that this position (one adopted by the ACF) was "appropriate for an inter-imperialist conflict such as the First World War, but when applied to a conflict between the leading imperialist powers on the one hand and a bankrupt, debt-ridden Third World nation on the other, this position has reactionary implications.. The 'plague on both your houses' approach is based on an assessment that there is no essential difference between Iraq and the US-led imperialist forces". Now, this argument implied that Saddam was less of a threat to the working class than the Western powers. As we said at the time, "In the global league table of capitalist states, certain countries and alliances will always be stronger and more influential in particular periods than others...it is impossible to offer 'political support' to Hussein's force without also supporting the attacks on the Iraqi

working class that must accompany the switch to a war footing".

Leninists

The AWG position was one that, not surprisingly, was shared by many Leninists, and indeed they began to work in a committee with small Leninist groups that argued for victory to Iraq. By now they had totally alienated themselves from the class struggle anarchist move-

ment, despite some attempts at back-peddalling in the last issue of their mag. Demoralised and unable to grow they wasted away.

The AWG experience is one that should be looked at in finding out what not to do in developing anarchist communist theory. With the collapse of Stalinism, a new period has opened, with the reemergence of anarchist communism. However anarchist communism is still a weak current, and is still prone to the

influences of on one hand Leninism (the examples of the AWG and the **Anarchist Workers Association/Libertarian Communist Group** in the '70s) and on the other hand the ivory tower irrelevance of the left communist milieu. The AWG sincerely hoped to make class struggle anarchism relevant, but failed to withstand the influences of Leninism. Those ex-AWGers and those influenced by AWG politics should seriously consider the lessons of the AWG collapse.

Intellectualism

THE 20th CENTURY has been the century of the intellectual — and nowhere more so than in the field of bourgeois politics. Intellectuals produced the two most horrendous totalitarian regimes of this century. The writings and sayings of dictators like Lenin and Hitler weren't a purely incidental part of their political careers. Such intellectual activities were key instruments in their rise to power, just as military prowess was the key to Napoleon's. Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and Lenin's *Imperialism*, (amongst other writings) were what put them on the map. The quality of their writings, in terms of logic and evidence, may have been patchy. But these were masterpieces of propaganda, texts for frustrated like-minded egotists to grab hold of to make into a political agenda of their own.

Marxist-Leninist tracts like *Imperialism* gave dramatic, bitter and black and white explanations of capitalism's world practice. There was a vividly pictured world vision of international arch-villains versus Lenin's own followers as heroic agents of destiny. Knowledge of this text meant the reader could find within it the master keys to history, without the drudgery of having to cope with the complexities of reality.

Likewise, Hitler's *Mein Kampf* created another world vision, peopled by whole races assigned their disparate roles in the grand, megalomaniac scheme of history, and made titans or devils according to one man's imagination. Drivel? Yes. Effective? Also yes.

Revelation

Fascism and the so-called 'communism' of the Bolsheviks, both totalitarian systems, traced their genesis to an intellectual phenomenon. They appealed to the same prejudices and susceptibilities of intellectuals as other crusades and movements that have seized the imagination of the educated and the articulate — the so-called 'thinking people'. These movements have in common a sense of a revelation grasped only by the anointed,

but a revelation that needs to be imposed on the benighted masses for their own good. Could anything be more of an ego trip, or more in keeping with the intellectuals' exalted view of themselves, or their resentment at seeing power in the hands of lesser beings?

To a certain extent it can be understood that working class people sucked into this maelstrom of bourgeois struggle were there through genuine conviction, a conviction that unfortunately cedes control over to social minorities, but nevertheless is burning with ardent desire to trash the capitalist system. Among the amazing stories of this century are the pilgrimages of intellectuals to the lands of the dictators, only to come back to gush over the 'progress' of tyrannies whose subjects were making desperate escapes whenever they could. When the facts of massacre and abuse were too blatant to deny, the explanation was that these were the 'growing pains' of a new society or 'local excesses', and we were reminded that "you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs". Much later the evidence was for all the world to see, that, yes, in the Ukraine the famine which killed millions had been deliberately engineered. This didn't matter to the intellectuals,

eggs were broken and that was that. The fatal talent of the intelligentsia is facility with words — and a blindness to the fact that reality is not so malleable as language.

Anarchist-communists have no argument with the pursuit of knowledge. Intellectual pursuits, argument, philosophising, all these activities have their place in society.

But in the absence of a society which encourages in each individual that individual's full potential, we have to be on guard against privileged minorities who build political structures and weave sophistries upon the bedrock of specialised knowledge and elitism. There is no shortcut to the revolutionary solution, better that we make mistakes and learn from experience, rather than be taken in by any offers by intellectuals.

Whether those intellectuals be academics philosophising or pseudo-Marxist Trotskyists attempting to revitalise the creeds of Leninism, this much is certain. The past is irrevocable, but many of the factors behind its tragedies are still at work in the present, and a danger to the future. The issues change — but the dogmatism and the ego behind the dogmatism are the same.



REVIEWS

What is Anarchism? An Introduction. Freedom Press. £1.95. 74pp.



This pamphlet consists of an introductory three chapters from Donald Rouum, the Wildcat strip cartoonist, and a number of excerpts from anarchist writings, mainly from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Some of these excerpts, particularly those from the well-known international activists like Bakunin, Kropotkin and Malatesta are well-argued exposés of revolutionary anarchism, based on reason and common sense. However, some of the later texts leave much to be desired. Take for example the text, 'The Relevance of Anarchism' by Bill Christopher, Jack Robinson, Philip Sansom and Peter Turner. They state that the heart of anarchism is "its opposition to government". Right, as far as it goes. But the historic anarchist movement grew from the development of working class organisation from the late 1860s on, and was a result of opposition to capitalism. It was and is, anti-state and anti-capitalist. To leave this vital ingredient out is to reduce anarchism to a vague humanist, liberal, individualist response to hierarchical society.

To compound this error, they go on to discuss the one big happy family of anarchism. "...Each anarchist will make his own moves and if we respect each other we will respect our own comrade's scale of priorities". So anarcho-syndicalists, individualists etc are meant to tolerate each other and co-exist in the same 'movement'. Any idea of collective decision-making and collective responsibility goes out of the window.

Similarly, in the section by Donald Rouum, various currents are described as anarchist. "There are anarchists who believe that wars and war preparations, penury, intolerance, oppression and other features of government are permanent features of society, and that therefore the only role for anarchists is permanent protest." He goes on to describe another 'current',

those who believe that "the overall trend of social change has been in the direction of wider individual choices". What he is describing in the first place is a form of liberalism where if the wheels of democracy are oiled enough then capitalism can be tolerated. In the second place he is describing another form of liberalism where everything is getting better bit by bit. Neither of these ways of thinking have anything to do with revolutionary anarchism. And in fact there are very few now who call themselves anarchists either here or elsewhere in the world, who subscribe to these views.

The 'Movement'

Donald Rouum repeats this elsewhere in the book where he states that few anarchists are in the formally structured organisations. Now, the 'movement' has evolved over the last 15 years, to the point where British anarchism is re-affirming its class struggle base, and where most anarchist activists are in one of the national organisations. In fact what Donald Rouum describes as the movement in this country bears more resemblance to that of the '60s than to the '90s.

The end result of the pamphlet, despite some excellent excerpts from anarchist thinkers, is an impression of a confused and contradictory mish-mash of opposing ideas and currents all within one big happy family. This has been the political morass from which the ACF and other class struggle anarchists in this country have pulled themselves out. As such, the pamphlet will not go very far in answering the interested individual's question of 'What is Anarchism?'.

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UPRISING IN THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN

Continued from page 7

a never-ceasing track transforming workers into assembling automatons brilliantly explodes the myth of the 'happy worker' in Japan.

Much has been made, in recent years, of the introduction of 'Japanese' techniques of management into the West (read exploitation). These techniques, so beloved of some British bosses, have ever-increasing productivity as their objective, use Taylorist, Fordist and Human Relations schools and have proved highly successful. Also important has been the role of the trade unions in Japan. Their total integration into capitalism is considerably more obvious even than in Britain where the unions at least have some appearance of independence from management.

Closed Shop

Before World War Two few Japanese workers were unionised. Many who were belonged to militant syndicalist unions (like those mentioned above) which were crushed in the general political reaction leading up to war. Japanese unionism re-emerged after the War and rapidly fell in with the ruling classes' programme of industrial reconstruction. Today one of the striking features of the trade unions is their operation in a closed shop environment encouraged (where it is not enforced) by the management of the Zaibatsu. The infamous company unions organise only Zaibatsu workers and indeed only 29% (1989) of that sector's employees. There have been few attempts at unionising the 'semi-unemployed'

day labourers and small firm workers. Zaibatsu unions are viewed, rightly, by most workers as simply a part of management and a rubber-stamp for the bosses designs.

A particular area of discontent in Zaibatsu companies is around the extremely long hours. On average the Japanese worker slaves between 200 and 500 hours per year longer than their 'Western' counterpart. Less than 20% of full-time workers get two-day weekends. The truth is that Japan's relative economic health is reliant upon ultra-exploitation. But the world recession has also seen Japanese capitalism expand its industrial base to its Asian neighbours, such as South Korea and Malaysia, and even 'Communist' China, where lower wages and poorer working conditions are enforceable. Wherever workers manage better wages and conditions companies have moved to more exploitable areas.

The day-labourers in Japan itself have tended to bear the brunt of the recession, however, and it is these workers, many from the Burakumin (hamlet people) caste, who suffer minority discrimination and who are the most potentially combative of the Japanese working class. In the face of vicious exploitation they have developed a strong sense of community solidarity and a spirit of comradeship that is often lacking in the full-time Zaibatsu workers. Alongside the 'colonised' workforces this super-exploited layer of the Japanese proletariat may prove to be the catalyst for mass social struggle in the Far East.

A Short History of Political Violence In Britain. Martyn Everett. 60p. 16 pages. Available from ACF London.

Our comrade Martyn states at the beginning of this absorbing little pamphlet that, "My purpose in writing this short history is to demonstrate that political violence is a tradition in Britain. It is a tradition of the British state, the British ruling class, and the institutional pillars of British society".

In this pamphlet he focusses on the use of physical violence as a weapon of state, excluding all out war, and in most cases the repression after major insurrections. As Martyn points out, the State has never been slow to resort to political violence to protect its interests, privilege and power. State violence from the time of the establishment of the Norman ruling class through the Peasants Revolt right up to the Great Miners' Strike and the Great Poll Tax Riot are documented. A grim account it is too.

As Martyn concludes, "The political representatives of the armed state, with their privileged access to mass-circulation newspapers, and nationally broadcast electronic media, are ready to denounce some kinds of violence at the drop of a hat. What they cannot, and will not denounce is the systematic violence that underpins the structure of power they benefit from".

Well worth a read!

Trotwatch. An Anarchist Commentary on the Life of the Left. Volume 1, No.1. £1, £5 to lefties.

This droll and well documented journal puts a variety of squirming Trotskyist and other Leninist specimens on the dissecting table.

Trotwatch's probing blade reveals a mess of ludicrous contradictions, scheming manipulation and outright opportunism. Analysed in detail are the recent split that severely crippled Militant, and a "frighteningly detailed" look at the "squalid spectacle of the Left and the General Election". *Trotwatch* says in its editorial that they believe that the continuing dominance of leftism, in all its guises, over most expressions of working class resistance to "things as they are", represents a serious bloc to the cre-

ation of a truly revolutionary anti-capitalist movement.

In an accompanying leaflet they point out that many of the problems afflicting British leftism are those that are affecting the real revolutionary movement, that is because notions of class structure and the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism have been under seige. As the class struggle intensifies again in the future, Leftism will once again attempt to dominate the newly emerging resistance. As they say, when that happens, it will be even more important to "know thine enemy". Loads of info, gossip and sectarianism from an anarchist communist perspective.

Aufheben. No.1. £2. 46 pages.

Despite its ponderous and obscure title, a German word often used in Hegel's dialectics, this new magazine does contain some useful articles. They believe that many comrades, especially in Britain, are afflicted with a virulent anti-intellectualism that creates the ludicrous impression that the Trots are the ones with a grasp of theory. Useful and worth reading are the critique of *Earth First!*, the review of Barrot's essay on anti-fascism, the analysis of the Los Angeles uprising and above all the article on 'Lessons from the Struggle against the Gulf War'. This examines the reactions and activities of revolutionaries in the No War But The Class War committee in which the ACF participated. The NWBTCW is criticised, for among other things, the lack of decent communication between those involved, and because it seemed content to act in a purely ideological way, defending the 'historic class position' in all its purity. To be fair, lack of notification often ensured low turnouts at NWBTCW meetings, and the rapid ending of the war nipped ongoing activity in the bud. But some of *Aufheben's* criticisms are justified. The

NEW BOOKSHOP

Our Aberystwyth comrades have started a bookshop. Open every day from 10am-5pm at Stall 9, New Mini-Market, St James Square, Aberystwyth.

article is important reading and should be taken into account in any future anti-militarist, anti-war mobilisations.

Ireland: Nationalism and Imperialism — The Myths Exploded. £0.30 + p&p from Subversion, Dept 10, 1 Newton St., Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1HW.

Subversion are a group that holds similar communist, and therefore internationalist, positions, to ourselves, so it's no surprise that this pamphlet should contain much we would wholeheartedly agree with. Like the ACF, Subversion argue that all forms of nationalism offer nothing but defeat to the working class and that in the context of a totally intergrated world economy 'national self-determination' is a leftist fantasy.

The pamphlet successfully rubbishes the pro-IRA arguments put forward by the **Revolutionary Communist Party et al.** The 'myths' which Subversion wish to explode are predominantly those cherished by the various leftist outfits who claim to speak for the international working class. However these are not the only 'myths' which dominate today.

So anyone familiar with the struggles of the six counties, especially those of us who hold to an internationalist perspective, may however feel a certain dissatisfaction with this pamphlet. Throughout there is a distinct feeling of detachment and we could be forgiven for thinking that most of Subversion's hatred is reserved for the green variant of nationalism rather than its red, white and blue version. In this pamphlet's desire to attack republicanism we can be led to feel that it is the IRA which is *the* problem. It must be remembered that the reactionary ideology which holds sway amongst the majority of the workers in the 'north' is loyalism.

So, when **Subversion** talk about IRA racketeering net-

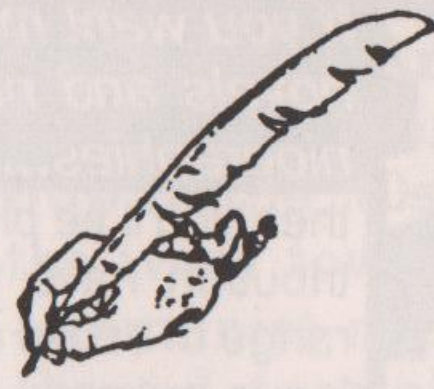
ting around £10 million per year (according to *The Guardian*!), we need to ask where such a figure comes from. We should not be fooled by 'black propaganda' put out by the British state. We should also mention that all para-militaries are up to the same and that the provos are far from alone in the intimidation business. Quoting the dodgy 'Families Against Intimidation and Terror Group' is also dubious. This group has consistently failed similarly to attack the best organised terror groups of all — the Army and RIR! A genuine expression of workers' self-organisation they are most certainly not!

This criticism aside, we would recommend that all libertarian revolutionaries get a look at this pamphlet as it is a positive contribution to a debate which is ongoing in our movement.

Libertarian Education

LibEd has published a new book on libertarian education, *No Master High or Low*, by John Shotton in which he states that "Libertarian education...is a set of educational beliefs that seeks to break down the boundaries between teachers and learners, that is grounded in a desire to construct non-coercive and anti-authoritarian pedagogies, and that is not concerned with systems of reward and punishment".

He describes the various free schools that have been set up in this country. Whilst these free schools may act as an example of how learning could be in a different society, too often they end up as dumping grounds for the 'enlightened' rich (Summerhill) or dumping grounds of local authorities for the socially 'maladjusted'. Any concept of libertarian education will have to be harnessed to a mass movement of the working class, or will suffer all the problems of being in a vacuum. Nevertheless, Shotton's book makes interesting reading. Information on the book from Clive Baldwin, 48 Springfield Rd, Leicester LE2 3BA.



Aims and principles

1. The Anarchist Communist Federation is an organisation of revolutionary class struggle anarchists. We aim for the abolition of all hierarchy, and work for the creation of a world-wide classless society: anarchist communism.

2. Capitalism is based on the exploitation of the working class by the ruling class. But inequality and exploitation are also expressed in terms of race, gender, sexuality, health, ability and age, and in these ways one section of the working class oppresses another. This divides us, causing a lack of class unity in struggle that benefits the ruling class. Oppressed groups are strengthened by autonomous action which challenges social and economic power relationships. To achieve our goal we must relinquish power over each other on a personal as well as a political level.

3. We believe that fighting racism and sexism is as important as other aspects of the class struggle. Anarchist-communism cannot be achieved while sexism and racism still exist. In order to be effective in their struggle against their oppression both within society and within the working class, women and black people may at times need to organise independently. However, this should be as working class women and black people as cross-class movements hide real class differences and achieve little for them. Full

emancipation cannot be achieved without the abolition of capitalism.

4. We are opposed to the ideology of national liberation movements which claims that there is some common interest between native bosses and the working class in face of foreign domination. We do support working class struggles against racism, genocide, ethnocide and political and economic colonialism. We oppose the creation of any new ruling class. We reject all forms of nationalism, as this only serves to redefine divisions in the international working class. The working class has no country and national boundaries must be eliminated. We seek to build an anarchist international to work with other libertarian revolutionaries throughout the world.

5. As well as exploiting and oppressing the majority of people, Capitalism threatens the world through war and the destruction of the environment.

6. It is not possible to abolish Capitalism without a revolution, which will arise out of class conflict. The ruling class must be completely overthrown to achieve anarchist communism. Because the ruling class will not relinquish power without the use of armed force, this revolution will be a time of violence as well as liberation.

7. Unions by their very nature

cannot become vehicles for the revolutionary transformation of society. They have to be accepted by capitalism in order to function and so cannot play a part on its overthrow. Trades unions divide the working class (between employed and unemployed, trade and craft, skilled and unskilled, etc). Even syndicalist unions are constrained by the fundamental nature of unionism. The union has to be able to control its membership in order to make deals with management. Their aim, through negotiation, is to achieve a fairer form of exploitation of the workforce. The interests of leaders and representatives will always be different to ours. The boss class is our enemy, and while we must fight for better conditions from it, we have to realise that reforms we may achieve today may be taken away tomorrow. Our ultimate aim must be the complete abolition of wage slavery. Working within the unions can never achieve this. However, we do not argue for people to leave unions until they are made irrelevant by the revolutionary event. The union is a common point of departure for many workers. Rank and file initiatives may strengthen us in the battle for anarchist-communism. What's important is that we organise ourselves collectively, arguing for workers to control struggles themselves.

8. Genuine liberation can only come about through the revolutionary self-activity of the working class on a mass scale. An anarchist communist society means not only co-operation between equals, but active involvement in the shaping and creating of that society during and after the revolution. In times of upheaval and struggle, people will need to create their own revolutionary organisations controlled by everyone in them. These autonomous organisations will be outside the control of political parties, and within them we will learn many important lessons of self-activity.

9. As anarchists we organise in all areas of life to try to advance the revolutionary process.

We believe a strong anarchist organisation is necessary to help us to this end. Unlike other so-called socialists or communists we do not want power or control for our organisation.

We recognise that the revolution can only be carried out directly by the working class. However, the revolution must be preceded by organisations able to convince people of the anarchist communist alternative and method. We participate in struggle as anarchist communists, and organise on a federative basis. We reject sectarianism and work for a united revolutionary anarchist movement.

JOIN US!

THE LAST FEW months have highlighted the failure of capitalism to deliver the goods. The rise of nationalism, often in blackshirt and brownshirt garb, the Rostock riots, the slaughter in ex-Yugoslavia, the deepening recession — or is it a slump? — laying millions of workers off in the West, the drive to the market in Eastern Europe creating havoc for millions of other working class people, the sanctimonious twaddle at the Earth Summit which came to the conclusion to do nothing about the ecological crisis; all of these things show the terrible state the world is in.

The bosses are gloating about how the market is triumphant world-wide. The collapse of state-capitalism has bought a lot of headaches for the boss class, however. The penetration of the market into Eastern Europe is hindered by the bureaucratic nature of the economic and social set-up there. The quick dollar they were hoping to make will not be immediately guaranteed. The social collapse in Eastern Europe has brought its problems, with waves of refu-

gees fleeing to Western Europe, something the boss class are not keen on.

Many people who think and care about social justice are beginning to see that the old solutions put forward, be they Labourist, Stalinist, Trotskyist, or Green are like so many hair-restorers sold by travelling medicine shows — "guaranteed to grow hair on a door-knob" and leading to instant hair loss! Just look at the Labour Party — doesn't it remind you of a Poodle pretending to be a Rotweiler? The so-called Labour 'left' is now seen as people like Gould and Livingstone! The Trades Union Congress can't even do to capitalism what it used to do feebly, that is negotiate a better price for wage labour. We're treated to the sight of the employers' organisation, the CBI, getting all palsy-walsy with Wibbley-Wobbly Willis and his chums at the TUC Congress. "Let's all pull together chaps!". That is, work more closely in keeping independent working class activity at bay.

Militant is thrashing around, with its membership falling by the thousands. In Scotland, it tailends the Scottish Nationalist front, Scotland United. As for the Socialist Workers Party, it aligns itself with Militant's call for a 'real' Labour Party, lurching further to the right.

So the crises of these different organisations, all in their way defending the whole rotten set-up, and the increasing difficulties of capitalism bring confusion and gloom to many. But at the same time, they reveal the real nature of the system of social control; they help people to come to a revolutionary understanding of society.

Decay

While these so called alternatives to capitalism start to decay, small but significant numbers of people are won to the revolutionary position.

We have been greatly encouraged in the last few months by the amount of interest in our ideas. Subscriptions to *Organise!* have shot up to their highest level, and we receive several requests for more info on the ACF every week. Membership of the ACF has soared, and we have gained a number of comrades, some with years of experience, some new to the movement, some radicalised by the anti-poll tax movement. We now feel that our ideas could take off. We appeal to all our readers to seriously think about joining the ACF and help create a dynamic organisation pledged to helping create a new, just, equal, and sane society.